

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ADDIS 05107 300849Z

11  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 094605

R 290923Z APR 76  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9179  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 5107

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS3  
TAGS: FT  
SUBJECT: POLICY: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON DJIBOUTI

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 4777, B. ADDIS ABABA 4829, C. ADDIS  
ABABA 4993

WE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS FROM THE ADMITTEDLY  
PAROCHIAL ADDIS PERSPECTIVE IN THE HOPE THAT THEY MAY BE  
OF SOME USE TO THE DEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL  
POLICY REVIEW ON DJIBOUTI HTAT WE HEAR IS NOW IN COURSE.

1. FROM HERE THERE APPEAR TO BE THREE NEW ELEMENTS TO BE  
TAKEN ACCOUNT OF BY US POLICY AS DJIBOUTI MOVES TOWARDS  
AN UNCERTAIN INDEPENDENCE. THESE ARE (A) THE EROSION OF  
THE POSITION OF ALL MAJOR POLITICAL FIGURES IN DJIBOUTI;  
(B) THE APPARENTLY NARROWING LIMITS OF FRENCH INTEREST  
AND STAYING POWER; AND (C) THE INCREASING POLITICAL  
FRAGMENTATION OF ETHIOPIA WHITH ITS RELATED CONSTRAINTS  
ON EPMG MILITARY CAPABILITIES.

2. AS DESCRIBED REF. A THE POSITION OF ALL MAJOR TFAI  
POLITICAL FIGURES SEEMS CLEARLY WEAKER. ALI AREF, WHOSE  
AFAR POWER BASE IS SPLIT AND WHOSE FRENCH SUPPORT SEEMS  
INCRASINGLY FINITE, APPEARS UNLIKELY TO BE ABLE TO SHED  
THE INCUBUS OF HIS COLONIAL FRENCH CONNECTION IN THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 ADDIS 05107 300849Z

TIME REMAINING BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. HASSAN GOULED'S

POLITICAL BASE, THE LPAI, IS BEING STEADILY SUBVERTED BY THE SOMALI GOVT ACTING THROUGH THE FLCS. AS A CONSEQUENCE, OBSERVERS HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT GOULED'S CAPACITY TO DEFEND DJIBOUTI'S INTERESTS VIS-A-VIS SOMALIA IS ALSO SHRINKING. AHMED DINI IS DESCRIBED TO US AS A MAN PLAYING OUT A PERSONAL VENDETTA AGAINST ALI AREF--AN INADEQUATE BASIS FOR LEADERSHIP IN AN INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI. SENATOR BARKAT GOURAT, AN AFAR OPPONENT OF ALI AREF, IS EQUALLY VULNERABLE TO THE CHARGE OF COLLABORATION WITH THE COLONIAL POWER. HE APPEARS TO HAVE NO SERIOUS BASE OF POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE TERRITORY AND SEEMS TO EXIST POLITICALLY PRIMARILY AS THE LEADER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY AFAR-OPPOSITION TO ALI AREF. AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, THAT AFAR OPPOSITION HAS THUS FAR REMAINED A MINORITY GROUP OF 16 OR 17, VIZ., ONE UNABLE TO DISPLACE ALI AREF IN THE LEADERSHIP OF A REUNITED AFAR COMMUNITY.

3. OBVIOUSLY, PARIS IS BETTER ABLE TO JUDGE THAN ARE WE THE LIMITS OF FRENCH STAYING POWER IN DJIBOUTI IN THE TURBULENT PERIOD NOW OPENING IN THAT TERRITORY'S HISTORY. WE NOTE, HOWEVER, PARIS' ASSESSMENT THAT THE GOF IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH STOMACH FOR THE PRESERVATION OF A STABILIZING FRENCH PRESENCE IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT. WE ALSO NOTE THAT THE FRENCH GOVT'S ATTEMPT TO BRING THE VARIOUS DJIBOUTI OPPOSITION FACTIONS TOGETHER WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ALI AREF'S MAJORITY APPEARS TO BE RUNNING INTO INCREASING DIFFICULTIES AS THE KEY LPAI, MANEUVERING FOR ADVANTAGE, CURRENTLY SEEMS PREPARED TO OBSTRUCT THIS FRENCH EFFORT. LASTLY, THE FRENCH ECONOMIC INTEREST IS NATURALLY SHRINKING AS FRENCHMEN LEAVE AND FRENCH CAPITAL IS BEING EXPATRIATED FROM THE TERRITORY IN THE FACE OF THE RISKS INHERENT IN AN UNCERTAIN DECOLONIZATION.

4. REF. C DISCUSSES THE FRAGMENTATION OF ETHIOPIA IN GREATER DEPTH AND SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS MESSAGE. REF. B, MEANWHILE, SETS FORTH FRENCH PERCEPTIONS OF ETHIOPIAN WEAKNESS WITH WHICH WE WOULD GENERALLY AGREE AT LEAST IN THE NEAR-TERM WHILE ADDIS IS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ERITREAN AND OTHER REBELLIONS. THIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 ADDIS 05107 300849Z

MEANS THAT THE PRINCIPAL BALLAST CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR THE STABILIZATION OF A SHAKY SITUATION IS THAT WHICH THE FRENCH GOVT MAY BE PREPARED TO APPLY (ALONG WITH WHATEVER MODERATING ROLE THE SOVS MAY CHOOSE TO PLAY).

5. IN THINKING ABOUT US POLICY AS IT AFFECTS DJIBOUTI WE PROCEED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE US TO CONTRIBUTE TO A STABILIZATION OF DJIBOUTI'S

PROCESS OF TRANSITION TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE. WE ASSUME, FURTHER, THAT OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY SUPPLEMENTING FRENCH EFFORTS TO THIS END AND BY AVOIDING ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT INDUCE THE FRENCH TO TRY TO PASS ANY PART OF THEIR BURDENS ON TO OUR SHOULDERS. WE ALSO ASSUME THAT US INTERESTS AT ISSUE IN THE SUCCESSFUL DECOLONIZATION OF DJIBOUTI (THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE IN THE HORN; RED SEA ACCESS AND TRANSIT INTER AHA FOR OURSELVES; RELATIONS WITH OUR ARAB/ISRAELI FRIENDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AS WELL AS OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES; CONTAINMENT OF SOVIET AREA POSITION, AND INFLUENCE) WARRANT APPROPRIATE US EFFORTS FOR THEIR PROTECTION. THIS LEADS US TO THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

6. WE NEED TO ENGAGE THE FRENCH IN A CONTINUING DIALOGUE AS DJIBOUTI'S DECOLONIZATION PROCESS UNROLLS. THE PURPOSE OF THE DIALOGUE SHOULD BE TO IDENTIFY THE STEPS WHICH THE USG MIGHT USEFULLY TAKE IN SUPPORT OF FRENCH EFFORTS TO CARRY THE DECOLONIZATION OF DJIBOUTI TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. OBVIOUSLY, THERE WOULD BE PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FRENCH SEEM LIKELY TO ASK US FIRST TO USE OUR INFLUENCE WITH THE EPMG IN A MANNER SUPPORTIVE OF THE SHARED OBJECTIVE OF A STABLE AND VIABLE INDEPENDENT DJIBOUTI TERRITORY. IN SO DOING THEY ARE LIKELY TO ASSESS OUR CAPABILITIES FOR INFLUENCING THE EPMG AS FAR HIGHER THAN THEY IN FACT ARE. MOREOVER, BOTH THE FRENCH AND WE MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY IN DETERMINING HOW AND WHEN WE SHOULD INVOLVE OURSELVES MORE DIRECTLY WITH THEM IN EFFORTS TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION WITHIN AND SURROUNDING THE TERRITORY.

7. DEPT SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER A USG WARNING TO EPMG AT APPROPRIATE TIME, DESIGNED TO DECREASE POSSIBILITY THAT  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 ADDIS 05107 300849Z

EPMG MIGHT INITIATE A PREEMPTIVE ATTACK, TO OCCUPY DJIBOUTI OR AGAINST SOMALIA. GIVEN PRESENT STRAINS ON ETHIOPIAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL SCENE SUCH A STRIKE DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY NOW. HOWEVER SITUATION COULD CHANGE, AND DEPT SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT USG HAS NEVER YET HAD OCCASION TO TELL EPMG THAT USG ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE MILITARY SUPPORT IN ANY CONFLICT WITH SOMALIA WOULD BE CONDITIONED BY MANNER IN WHICH THE CONFLICT STARTS, AMONG OTHER FACTORS.

8. BE THAT AS IT MAY, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE CONDITION- PRECEDENT TO ANY ACTION THE USG MAY DECIDE TO TAKE IS THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE LIMITS OF OUR INTERESTS AND THE FORMULATION OF POLICY GUIDELINES WHICH TAKE THESE LIMITS INTO ACCOUNT. AS THE DEPT PROCEEDS WITH THIS EFFORT,

IT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER THE THREE NEW ELEMENTS CITED  
ABOVE. THEY LEAD US TO THE TENTATIVE CONCLUSION THAT THE  
FRENCH MAY WELL BE OVER THEIR HEADS, AND THAT INTER ALIA  
THE AVOIDANCE OF FURTHER CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE  
SOVIET UNION'S CLIENT SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA--NOT TO  
SPEAK OF OUR INTEREST IN PRESERVING STABILITY IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST--CALLS FOR A MORE ACTIVE AMERICAN ROLE,  
IN CLOSE CONCERT WITH AND IN SUPPORT OF FRENCH EFFORTS.  
HUMMEL

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** INDEPENDENCE, POLITICAL SITUATION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 APR 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** saccheem  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976ADDIS05107  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** X3  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760166-0355  
**From:** ADDIS ABABA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t1976049/aaaaahdo.tel  
**Line Count:** 178  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 4  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** 76 ADDIS ABABA 4777, 76 ADDIS ABABA 4829  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** saccheem  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 23 APR 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <10 AUG 2004 by saccheem>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** POLICY: FURTHER THOUGHTS ON DJIBOUTI  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PGOV, PINT, FT, FR, ET  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006